

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MADRID 00385

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: PSOE'S GUERRA ON THE PARTY AND POLITICS

REF: STATE 005274

1. SUMMARY. PSOE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER ALFONSO GUERRA -- GENERALLY THOUGHT TO BE THE NUMBER TWO MAN IN THE PARTY (ALTHOUGH HE DENIES THIS) -- PREDICTS A SOCIALIST GOVT IN ABOUT 18 MONTHS, BASED ON A PSOE MUNICIPAL ELECTION VICTORY IN AT LEAST 55 OF THE 75 SPANISH CITIES WITH A POPULATION OF OVER 50,000, FOLLOWED BY A PSOE PLURALITY IN THE SUCCEEDING NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. THE OUTSPOKEN GUERRA SPARED ALMOST NO ONE FROM CRITICISM, RANGING FROM THE KING, SUAREZ AND THE MILITARY, THROUGH THE PCE AND THE SOVIET UNION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR PAID A CALL JANUARY 12 ON ALFONSO GUERRA, CONTROVERSIAL PSOE SECRETARY FOR ORGANIZATION AND DEPUTY FOR SEVILLE, GENERALLY CONSIDERED A LEFTIST FIREBRAND. THIS WAS AS FAR AS WE
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KNOWN, THE FIRST SUBSTANTIVE EMBASSY CONTACT WITH GUERRA. DURING THE ONE-HOUR EXCHANGE, GUERRA, WHO EMPHASIZED AT THE OUTSET THAT HE WAS NO DIPLOMAT AND MADE A HABIT OF CALLING A SPADE A SPADE, HAD THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST:

3. THE INEVITABLE PSOE GOVT. GUERRA FORESAW A "CERTAIN"

SOCIALIST GOVT IN ABOUT 18 MONTHS, AFTER THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND, PREFERABLY, AFTER THE POST-CONSTITUTION NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE CONTEST AS WELL. A MINORITY SOCIALIST GOVT OBVIOUSLY WOULD POSE DIFFICULTIES, BUT GUERRA BELIEVED ABOUT 36 PERCENT OF THE VOTE NATIONALLY WOULD GIVE THE PARTY SOME 50 PERCENT OF THE SEATS. (GUERRA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE PARTY'S POLLS INDICATED THE SPANISH ELECTORATE WAS NOW WELL DEFINED AND THAT THERE WOULD LIKELY BE RELATIVELY LITTLE VARIANCE IN THE NEXT NATIONAL ELECTION RESULTS; HOWEVER, HE SAW THE PSOE WINNING A PLURALITY BASED ON HOLDING ITS OWN ELECTORATE AND GAINING SOME SUPPORT FROM UCD AND UNDECIDED VOTERS.) THE PSOE COULD THEN ATTRACT PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT FROM SOME REGIONAL PARTIES AND UCD DISSIDENTS. THE BUREAUCRACY, HE AVERRED, ALREADY WAS MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THE PSOE THAN THE UCD, AND OBVIOUSLY WOULD STAY ON TO SERVE A PSOE GOVT. THE MILITARY ALSO WOULD ACCEPT IT.

4. SUAREZ AND UCD. GUERRA CAST ASPERSIONS AT SUAREZ' DEMOCRATIC CREDENTIALS, LABELING HIM AT ONE POINT AN UNRECONSTRUCTED FALANGIST AUTHORITARIAN. ALTHOUGH SUAREZ WAS A VERY ABLE POLITICIAN, HE HAD NO LONG RANGE VIEW OF SPANISH POLITICS AND WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD THE "ARTIFICIAL" UCD TOGETHER ONCE IT HAD SUFFERED AN ELECTORAL REVERSE.
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5. PARTY ORGANIZATION. THE PSOE CURRENTLY HAS ABOUT 200,000 MILITANTS, WHO PAY A MINIMUM OF 200 PESETAS PER MONTH IN DUES, EXCEPT IN SPECIAL CASES SUCH AS RETIREES, WHO ARE EXEMPTED. ORGANIZATIONAL WORK IS PROCEEDING SUCCESSFULLY. THE PARTY IS ORGANIZED IN ALL OF SPAIN'S PROVINCES, AND 8 REGIONAL FEDERATIONS ARE IN PLACE. WHEN THE FINAL DEMARCATION OF REGIONS IS ACCOMPLISHED BY THE CONSTITUTION AND SUCCEEDING AUTONOMY LEGISLATION, GUERRA ANTICIPATED THAT THE PSOE WOULD HAVE 11 TO 13 REGIONAL FEDERATIONS. THESE REGIONAL GROUPINGS ARE THEN BROKEN DOWN INTO PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS; IN LARGE CITIES, THEY ARE LAYERED EVEN FURTHER, INTO DISTRICT AND NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPINGS'

6. THE EXECUTIVE AND FEDERAL COMMITTEES. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE GENERALLY MAKES DECISIONS BY CONSENSUS. WHEN CONSENSUS IS IMPOSSIBLE, A VOTE IS THEN TAKEN ALTHOUGH GUERRA IMPLIED THAT THIS WAS INFREQUENT. (AT ONE POINT GUERRA WAXED INDIGNANT AT PRESS REPORTS OF A RECENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING WHICH HAD HIM ABSTAINING ON AN IMPORTANT VOTE. "I NEVER ABSTAIN," HE SAID.) THE

COMMITTEE NORMALLY CONSISTED OF 19 MEMBERS, BUT HAD ONLY 18 AT THE MOMENT, BECAUSE UGT LEADER NICOLAS REDONDO HAD STEPPED DOWN IN ORDER TO DEVOTE FULL TIME TO LABOR MATTERS. IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARTY STATUTES, THE DECISION ON WHETHER AND WITH WHOM TO FILL THE VACANCY WOULD BE TAKEN AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARTY'S 93-MEMBER FEDERAL COMMITTEE, MADE UP OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PLUS REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH OF THE REGIONAL OR, AS THE CASE MAY BE, PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATIONS. GUERRA SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THEY WOULD DECIDE TO FILL THE REDONDO VACANCY OR NOT, ALTHOUGH HE THOUGHT IT SHOULD BE "SO LONG AS PABLO (MADRID'S PABLO CASTELLANO) IS NOT THE CHOICE."

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GUERRA DENIED THAT HE IS THE PARTY'S NUMBER-TWO MAN, POINTING OUT THAT THERE IS NO PROVISION IN THE STATUTES FOR A "SECOND SECRETARY" AND IMPLYING THAT THE INCAPACITATION OF GONZALEZ WOULD, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATUTES, PRECIPITATE THE ELECTION BY THE FEDERAL COMMITTEE OF A NEW FIRST SECRETARY. (THE PARTY STATUTES PROVIDE THAT THE FEDERAL COMMITTEE ELECTS FROM ITS OWN MEMBERSHIP THOSE WHO ARE TO FILL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE VACANCIES BETWEEN BIENNIAL CONGRESSES.)

7. THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. GUERRA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT UCD WOULD TAKE THE LION'S SHARE OF THE MUNICIPALITIES, BUT THIS COUNTED FOR LITTLE, HE SAID. THE PSOE WOULD WIN AT LEAST 55 OF THE 75 SPANISH CITIES WITH A POPULATION

OF OVER 50,000, GUERRA PREDICTED, AND THESE WERE THE ONES THAT COUNTED. AS OTHER PSOE LEADERS HAVE DONE, GUERRA MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE VIEWED THE MUNICIPALS AS THE PSOE'S STEPPINGSTONE TO POWER. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, HE STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT THE PSOE HAD NO INTENTION OF ALLYING WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN THE MUNICIPALS. "WHY SHOULD WE DO ANYTHING FOR THE SMALL-FRY?"

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8. THE PSOE AND THE MONCLOA PACT. GUERRA MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT THE PACT WAS NOT TO THE PSOE'S LIKING, APPARENTLY PRIMARILY BECAUSE IT REDOUNDED TO THE GOVT'S BENEFIT AND TO NO ONE ELSE'S. HE ACKNOWLEDGED IMPLICITLY THAT IT HAD RESULTED FROM AGREEMENT BETWEEN SUAREZ AND CARRILLO, AND THAT THE PSOE HAD BEEN DRAGGED ALONG FOR WANT OF ANY ALTERNATIVE. AS GUERRA PUT IT, THE PSOE HAD NOT FELT THAT IT COULD TAKE THE CHANCE THAT REFUSAL TO ADHERE TO THE PACT NOW WOULD SOMEHOW UNDERMINE THE PARTY'S ABILITY TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY IN THE FUTURE. AS A RESULT, THEY HAD GONE ALONG, BUT IN THE PROCESS HAD SUCCESSFULLY BARGAINED HARD TO MAKE THE PACT MORE REFORMIST ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY AND MORE PROGRESSIVE POLITICALLY.

9. THE MONARCHY AND THE MILITARY. GUERRA EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS NOT AND WOULD NEVER BE A MONARCHIST AND THAT THE PARTY WOULD BE UNFAITHFUL TO ITS PRINCIPLES AND ITS HISTORY IF IT ABANDONED ITS REPUBLICANISM. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, DEMOCRACY WAS WHAT COUNTED, AND IF THAT WERE POSSIBLE UNDER THE EXISTING MONARCHY, THEN HE AND THE PARTY WOULD PARTICIPATE -- AND GOVERN -- WITH A MONARCH AS CHIEF OF STATE. HE CREDITED THE KING WITH CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL TALENT, BUT CRITICIZED HIM FOR BEING MORE ATTENTIVE TO THE RIGHT THAN THE LEFT. (HE SENT CONDOLENCES, FOR EXAMPLE, TO THE FAMILIES OF POLICEMEN KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY, BUT NOT TO THE FAMILIES OF THOSE KILLED AS A RESULT OF POLICE BRUTALITY.) AS FOR THE MILITARY, GUERRA HAD BEEN VERY UNIMPRESSED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF FIRST VICE PRESIDENT/DEFENSE MINISTER GUTIERREZ MELLADO BEFORE THE CONGRESS OF DEPUTIES DEFENSE COMMITTEE ON JANUARY 10. GUTIERREZ MELLADO'S

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PRESENTATION HAD LEFT QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS OWN ABILITY, GUERRA CHARGED, AND HAD DEMONSTRATED CLEARLY THAT THE GOVT

HAD NO MILITARY/DEFENSE POLICY. IF THIS WAS THE BEST
SPAIN HAD TO OFFER, GUERRA SAID, THEN IT IS A SAD
COMMENTARY ON THE SPANISH MILITARY.

10. ANDALUSIAN PRE-AUTONOMY ARRANGEMENTS. REFERRING
TO THE RECENTLY-ANNOUNCED AGREEMENT BY ANDALUSIAN
PARLIAMENTARIANS ON A DRAFT PRE-AUTONOMY STATUTE, AND
REPORTS OF GOVERNMENTAL RESISTANCE TO THE AGREEMENT
SINCE IT GUARANTEES THAT A PSOE MEMBER WILL BE
PRESIDENT OF THE ANDALUSIAN "JUNTA" (MADRID 0357),
GUERRA STATED THE GOVT REALLY HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT
TO ACCEPT A PSOE PRESIDENT. THE PSOE, AFTER ALL, HAD
A MAJORITY AMONG THE ANDALUSIAN PARLIAMENTAKMOLZA IT WOULD BE
DEMONSTRATING ITS LACK OF COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY AND
HANDING THE PSOE THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ON A PLATTER
AS A RESULT. GUERRA SAID HE BELIEVED NEITHER HE NOR
PSOE DEPUTY RAFAEL ESCUREDO WOULD BE THE PSOE NOMINEE
FOR THE ANDALUSIAN PRESIDENCY.

11. PSOE-BRAND SOCIALISM. SPANISH SOCIALISM WOULD BE
SOMETHING DIFFERENT AND PECULIARLY SPANISH, SAID GUERRA,
REITERATING WHAT OTHER PARTY LEADERS HAVE TOLD US ABOUT
THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING A SOCIALIST PARTY WITH
STRONG, ARTICULATED SOCIALIST LABOR SUPPORT, MAKING
SPAIN THE ONLY SOUTHERN EUROPEAN COUNTRY WITH A
SOCIALIST PARTY THAT DID NOT HAVE TO, IN THE END, DEPEND
ON COMMUNIST LABOR BACKING. HE CAUTIONED, HOWEVER,
THAT THIS DID NOT MEAN A MORE NORTHERN EUROPEAN SOCIALIST
MODEL FOR SPAIN. CLASS DIFFERENCES IN SPAIN WERE SIMPLY

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TOO SHARP, GUERRA CONCLUDED, FOR NORTHERN EUROPEAN
STYLE SOCIALISM TO WORK HERE.

12. GUERRA IN MOSCOW. WHEN GUERRA LEARNED THAT THE
POLITICAL COUNSELOR HAD SPENT FOUR YEARS IN MOSCOW,
HE SAID, "I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU; HOW DID YOU STAND IT?"
REFERRING TO HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION AS
PART OF A DELEGATION HEADED BY PSOE SECGEN FELIPE
GONZALEZ (SEE 77 MADRID 10576), GUERRA SAID THE ONLY WORD
THAT COULD DESCRIBE HIS REACTION TO THAT COUNTRY
WAS SADNESS (TRISTEZA). THE SOVIET PEOPLE, HE SAID,
ENJOYED NEITHER THE MATERIAL ADVANTAGES NOR THE
POLITICAL AND CIVIL LIBERTIES THAT THE COUNTRY'S WEALTH
MADE POSSIBLE FOR THEM. ALTHOUGH HE DISAGREED WITH
THE CUBAN REGIME, GUERRA CONCLUDED THAT AT LEAST IN
CUBA, IN VIEW OF THE MISERY OF SO MUCH OF THE POPULACE,
SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE, BUT IN THE SOVIET UNION THERE
SIMPLY WAS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CURRENT SITUATION.
THE SOVIET POPULACE WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH BETTER OFF TODAY,
HE SAID, IF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION HAD NEVER TAKEN PLACE.

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13. COMMENT: GUERRA IS INTENSE, AGGRESSIVE, VERY
BRIGHT, AND AN OBVIOUSLY ASTUTE, DEDICATED AND EXTREMELY
HARD WORKING POLITICIAN. HE ORGANIZED THE PARTY'S
DECEMBER 1976 CONGRESS AND RAN ITS SUCCESSFUL JUNE 1977
ELECTION EFFORT. HE IS NOW DEEPLY INVOLVED, AMONG OTHER
THINGS, IN PLANNING FOR THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS EFFORT,
TOGETHER WITH FELLOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS LUIS
FAJARDO AND GUILLERMO GALEOTE. CRITICISM COMES ALL
TOO EASILY TO GUERRA, AND IT IS OBVIOUS THAT HE WILL
CONTINUE TO BE AN EXTREMELY CONTROVERSIAL -- AND
IMPORTANT -- POLITICAL ACTOR IN SPAIN. BUT WHILE WE FIND
HIS ANALYSIS INTERESTING, WE DO NOT BY ANY MEANS TAKE
IT ON FACE VALUE. FURTHERMORE, WE BELIEVE HE SERIOUSLY
UNDERESTIMATES SUAREZ AND THE UCD AND TENDS TO BE RATHER
SUPERFICIAL IN SOME AREAS, SUCH AS IN HIS EVALUATION
OF THE MILITARY CONUNDRUM. HIS ALLUSION TO PABLO
CASTELLANO INDICATES THAT THE PARTY LEADERSHIP'S
ATTEMPTS TO "CONTROL" THE FORMER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEMBER BY MAKING HIM A SECRETARY OF THE LOWER CHAMBER
HAVE MET WITH LITTLE SUCCESS, AND THAT HE CONTINUES
TO BE A THORN IN THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S SIDE.
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